

January 2008

Welcome to the twenty-ninth edition of the **MassGIS GISette**, a bi-monthly newsletter e-mailed to over 1,500 of our users and partner agencies to keep them informed of data updates, GIS events, and on-going technology developments. This newsletter will not replace more focused e-mails that many of you currently receive. A page on our website has been created for the [GISette](#). There you will find back issues of the GISette and an [online subscription form](#).

While our primary intent in publishing the GISette is to disseminate information related to MassGIS initiatives and data development in particular, we also see the GISette as a means of communicating public agency GIS news. So we encourage readers to send in updates or announcements concerning public agencies that they would like included in the GISette. We particularly want to encourage submission of announcements concerning data development projects. Announcements should be sent to Paul Nutting at paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

What's New

Municipal GIS Resource Pages Revised, Updated

The pages on the MassGIS web site containing resources for municipalities have been revised; they are easier to use and better organized. Some of the content has also been updated. Go to the [updated Municipal GIS pages](#).

Assistance for Implementing Digital Plan Standard

MassGIS recently released a four page document that provides more guidance for implementing the "Standard for Digital Plan Submission to Municipalities". Topics covered by this document include:

1. Implementing the standard through a by-law versus through subdivision or other regulations.
2. What level of the standard to implement.
3. Creating guidelines for developers.
4. A suggested explanation for describing why you want to create a by-law or change your regulations.
5. Suggested language for a by-law or regulation.

The guidance document can be found at [digital plan standard](#) on the MassGIS web site.

Data Distribution Offer for Municipalities

MassGIS is now able to offer Massachusetts Cities and Towns the option of having MassGIS provide access to their GIS data via our web site. Thus, instead of having to respond to data requests, a community can simply refer people to the MassGIS web site. Participating communities are expected to provide updates, if any, of the data being distributed at least annually. There is a written agreement which outlines roles and responsibilities in more detail at [Municipal data distribution agreement](#).

Town Boundaries Following Road Rights-of-Way

MassGIS distributes a version of municipal boundaries based on locations surveyed around the periphery of each community (see <http://www.mass.gov/mgis/townssurvey.htm>). In some communities, a portion of their boundary follows a road or rail right-of-way. Boundaries with that characteristic are identified in an attribute of this data layer. MassGIS' current effort for boundaries following a right-of-way is to, where possible, find layout plans for these rights-of-way, scan and georeference them, and then digitize the portion of the right-of-way that is a municipal boundary. This approach will ensure that the municipal boundary is as accurate as possible short of a field survey. MassGIS recently updated the boundaries for some communities in Norfolk County from layout plans (we'd like to thank the Norfolk County Engineering Department for their assistance on this work) and is interested in doing similar updates elsewhere. If you know where relevant layout plans can be obtained for any municipal boundaries following a right-of-way, please contact [Neil MacGaffey](#) at MassGIS.

Land Use Mapping Project

Funding has been restored for the land use mapping project and MassGIS recently met with the vendor, Sanborn Mapping, to kick off the resumption of work. The project deliverable is land use mapping with a classification scheme consistent with the MacConnell mapping, last completed in 1999, but the base, the 1:5000 orthos, will be considerably more detailed. View the [full listing of land use categories](#) on the MassGIS website. Three pilot areas, including both rural and urbanized areas, were completed in Phase I. Sanborn has incorporated feedback on those into their workflow. Parcel data, where available, is being used to complement the imagery, particularly to distinguish between commercial, industrial, multi-family and institutional uses whose "signatures" in the imagery are sometimes very similar. An automated, draft version of Southeastern Mass. has been delivered, and subsequent delivery areas are outlined in a [map](#) on the MassGIS site. When we have a delivery schedule it will be tied to this map.

Online Mapping

Coordinates and Scale in ArcIMS Viewers

In the ArcIMS HTML Viewer type online mapping viewers (for example, the USGS topo maps viewer), Massachusetts State Plane NAD 83 meters coordinates and a scale will be shown in the browser status bar if you enable this. Earlier browser versions did not require a user to enable this feature, but later browsers do. The steps:

Internet Explorer: Tools < Internet Options < Security < Custom Level. Scroll close to the bottom and enable the setting entitled "Allow status bar updates via script"

Firefox: Tools < Options < Content. Click on the first Advanced button and check the box labeled "Change status bar text".

Netscape: We don't work as much with Netscape and the functionality that allows you to render any website and alternate its display as it would look in IE and Firefox. We got the coordinates to display nonetheless, but it seems that you have to do a 'control-refresh' when alternating views. Tools < Options < Site Controls. Add your URL to the list of sites under "My settings" and then choose "I trust this site" under "Master Settings". Then, click the advanced button on the right hand side and check the box entitled "Change Status Bar Text"

For all of the browsers, make sure of course that the status bar is visible.

Database Updates

- **New [Surficial Geology \(1:24,000\)](#) - 12/26/2007**

This data layer is part of a comprehensive study by the U.S. Geological Survey to produce a statewide digital map of the surficial geology at a 1:24,000-scale. This compilation of surficial geologic materials defines the areas of exposed bedrock, and the boundaries between glacial till, glacial stratified deposits, and overlying early-postglacial and postglacial deposits. The layer, a joint data development effort by the USGS, the Office of the Massachusetts State Geologist, and MassGIS, is available for 39 USGS quadrangle sheets (see the [Status Map](#)). Production is continuing, with plans to complete the layer statewide. As part of the project, MassGIS also received scans of the original 1:24,000 USGS topographic quadrangle maps that were used as the basemap to compile the geology data. See the [USGS 1:24,000 Surficial Geology Topographic Base Map Images](#) layer for more details.

- **[Regional Planning Agencies Layer](#) Modified - 12/13/2007**

The RPA abbreviation and Web site URL were added to the attribute table. Also, the features were edited to form multi-part polygons.

- **New [Dun and Bradstreet Business Data](#) Layer - 12/12/2007**

This datalayer contains point locations of businesses across the commonwealth, created from the commercial Dun and Bradstreet database. The data may be viewed in [OLIVER](#) from Infrastructure > Business > DNB Business Points. Due to licensing restrictions, this data cannot be downloaded or otherwise shared.

- **[Town Boundaries Layer from Survey Coordinates](#) Updated - 12/4/2007**

Five boundary areas in the polygon and line layers were adjusted to match digital surveyed right-of-way (ROW) plans provided to MassGIS by the Norfolk County Engineering Department.

- **[Level II Assessors' Parcels Data](#) Updated - 12/3/2007**

In November, Level II data became available for Auburn and was updated for Eastham. In December, new data for Spencer was added to the Level II layer. Spencer's older data was removed from the Level 0 layer.

- **[National Wetlands Inventory Layer](#) Updated - 11/1/2007**

MassGIS is now distributing two recently updated NWI layers. Data are nearly complete statewide for wetland type polygons.

Staff News and Meeting Announcements

New Staff

As noted in the last edition, our map and data order fulfillment staff person, Susan Brunton, has moved on. We now have two interns who are doing some of these tasks and they are also involved in other projects. **Lindsey Hays** is studying at Boston University and **Ben Krepp** is at the Boston campus of UMass.

Massachusetts Geographic Information Council Seminar Series

[3-Dimensional Visualization for Community Planning and Development](#)

January 17, 2008, 10-Noon, Auburn Town Hall, 104 Central Street, Auburn, MA 01501

Any comments or suggestions about the GISette are welcomed paul.nutting@state.ma.us.

MassGIS-The Commonwealth's Office of Geographic and Environmental Information is located within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and is charged with the collection, enhancement, storage and dissemination of the Commonwealth's geographic data.

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